



# Policy for Use of RIDOT Computer Equipment

December 6, 2001

## Introduction

The RIDOT is committed to providing the computer resources necessary for all employees to carry out their assigned functions and to give all units access to the latest engineering and computer technology. The tools currently provided by MIS include desktop and notebook computers, specialized application servers, an intradepartmental network and access to the Internet with electronic mail.

The computer equipment and services are provided for the purpose of conducting State business and are designed to make each Departmental Unit more efficient in information gathering and exchange. While these services and equipment assist each unit in achieving its mission, use of computer systems and network imposes certain responsibilities and obligations on all users. Violation of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action. In addition, use of the system and network is granted subject to State and Federal Laws.

## Computer Privacy Issues

In using RIDOT's computer equipment and network services, employees must recognize that workplace computers are neither personal nor "private" in any sense. The use of computer communication technologies, and particularly the use of e-mail, often gives us a false sense of privacy. The computers that we use at the Department are the property of the State of Rhode Island. The contents of all materials saved on these computers, including materials from the Internet, e-mail etc., are not private and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy for the user of the equipment. The content of the materials saved on these computers is the property of the State of Rhode Island and is subject to review by the employer at any time. The bottom line is that we must all be aware that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding materials on our computers at work. We must also be aware that our access to the Internet while at work is governed by public and employer expectations that each of us will act responsibly and with the knowledge that we are the stewards of public resources.

## E-mail

All employees connected to the RIDOT network have been provided with e-mail capabilities. Employees have the ability to send electronic messages throughout the world. Employees should be aware that e-mail messages are clearly identifiable as coming from this State Department. With that in mind, the following policies governing the use of RIDOT's e-mail system have been established.

The following actions are prohibited:

- a. Sending chain letters by e-mail;

- b. Sending messages by e-mail for commercial or partisan political purposes such as circulating advertising for products or political candidates;
- c. Using e-mail to threaten, harass or intimidate another person;
- d. Sending messages that are profane, obscene, or that use language that offends or tends to degrade others;
- e. Sending anonymous e-mails, or representing the e-mail as coming from another person;
- f. Sending e-mails with the intent to harm, such as knowingly transmitting a computer virus.

Solicitation through e-mail is prohibited without the express authorization of the Division Administrator and the Human Resource Administrator, whether or not the solicitation is for charitable causes.

Mass e-mailing may be performed only when authorized by the Section Chief or Administrator

## Internet Usage

Unlawful or inappropriate use of the Internet is not permitted. This means no access to pornographic sites or other offensive sites, and no downloading of material violating copyright or licensing laws. If employees accidentally access a website that contains pornographic, sexually explicit, inappropriate or illegal materials, they must leave the site immediately.

MIS has installed software to monitor Internet usage and to block out certain Internet sites that may contain content which is inappropriate to the workplace. The filtering software is not perfect, and MIS will assist users who are blocked from sites which are not inappropriate for State business.

RIDOT's access to the Internet is limited in bandwidth. To conserve bandwidth, employees must limit access to Internet "streaming" sites to the minimum amount of time necessary to achieve the information needed for business purposes. Streaming involves receiving continuous streams of data such as stock, sports, news and weather tickers, music, radio and video.

## Network/Computer Monitoring and Filtering

MIS has the responsibility of maintaining a stable computer network, and to achieve that end has installed software which monitors the operation and configuration of each computer attached to the network. To improve computer and system stability, MIS will be migrating most computers to the Windows 2000 operating system which will restrict the loading of software to MIS Tech support staff and by certain designated employees within Department Sections. In addition to improving computer and system stability, this approach will prevent the installation of illegal and unauthorized software on our computers.

## RI State Government Information Network Acceptable Use Privacy Policy

Because RIDOT utilizes the RI State Government Information Network (RISGIN) for access to the Internet, we must comply with the Acceptable Use/Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (effective 9/1/00) issued by the Office of Library and Information Services. All RIDOT employees must comply with this policy. The RISGIN Policy which is reprinted below is incorporated into the RIDOT policy.

## **RI State Government Information Network**

### **Acceptable Use/Privacy and Confidentiality**

Use of the RI State Information Network is subject to the policies and guidelines found within this document. The Office of Library and Information Services reserves the right to terminate the accounts and privileges of those it determines to be in violation of or abusing policies including acceptable use.

RISGIN makes no effort to protect the privacy of or maintain confidentiality of electronic mail correspondence or of records of Internet usage. Management reserves the right to investigate, read or track any electronic mail or Internet use. Users should not use RISGIN for matters they wish to keep private or confidential.

### **Following are Acceptable Uses of the RI Information Network:**

To communicate with other state agencies and business partners of state agencies.

To exchange professional knowledge and information and to keep current on or debate issues in a field or sub-field of knowledge.

To participate in professional society or equivalent activities related to the user's professional vocational discipline.

To apply for or administer grants or contracts for work-related applications.

To use any other administrative communications or activities in direct support of work-related functions.

### **Following are Unacceptable Uses:**

Illegal or malicious use is not acceptable. Use should be consistent; with guiding ethical statements and accepted community standards. The network may not be used in ways that violate applicable laws or regulations such as use of the network to transmit or solicit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials.

Use of the network or any attached network, LAN or WAN, in a manner that precludes or significantly hampers its use by others is not acceptable.

Connections which create routing patterns that are inconsistent with the effective and shared use of the network shall not be established.

Unsolicited commercial advertising is not acceptable.

Recreational use is not acceptable.

Use for revenue generating activities, unless stated as a specifically acceptable use. is not acceptable.

Use for private or personal business activities, as defined in a commercial sense such as the buying and selling of commodities or services with a profit motive, is not acceptable.

It is not acceptable to use the network to solicit information with the intent of using such information to cause personal harm or bodily injury.

It is not acceptable to use the network so as to interfere with or disrupt network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer worms or viruses, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the network.

Sending bulk mailings (except in the conduct of state business) or chain letters via electronic mail is unacceptable.

### **Following are Ethical Standards:**

To respect the privacy of other users; for example, users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized to do so by that user.

To respect the legal protection provided by copyright and licensing laws to programs and data.

To respect the integrity of computing systems; for example, users shall not intentionally develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer or computing system.